



DECEMBER, 2018

WWW.IUC.EU

PAVLOS MELAS – SAN JUSTO

Pavlos Melas and San Justo are concentrating their partnership on two thematic areas: sustainable use of land and waste management. Through doing so, they are gaining an appreciation of different approaches to economic, legislative and financing issues.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Pavlos Melas (Greece) is part of the greater metropolitan area of Thessaloniki. It includes a densely populated residential area as well as a peri-urban territory that includes land appropriated for reforestation, transnational road networks and small and medium-sized industries. It has 99,245 inhabitants according to the 2011 census.

San Justo (Argentina) is a city in the central region of the province of Santa Fe. According to the 2001 census, it has 22,000 inhabitants. The territorial jurisdiction of San Justo includes an area of 790 km², consisting mainly of agricultural land. A highway axis connecting Argentina to Uruguay is situated at the periphery of the city. San Justo is also in close proximity to the Parana River, through which goods (mainly

soya) are sailed to Buenos Aires harbor. Both cities are currently going through a transformative phase. As part of their IUC cooperation they seek to promote transformation in line with the values of sustainable and inclusive growth. The two cities have great differences in size, the built and natural environment, social needs and expectations, legislative ordinances and economic opportunities, and so face diverse challenges – despite this, they have established a common vision.

Already Pavlos Melas has shared their experience on how to regulate the growth of cities and how to implement sustainability strategies, while San Justo has outlined the benefits of a legislative system that allows regions to opt for their own development plans, giving them more freedom to include local objectives within their strategies.



CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS

Following a thorough exchange of information, both cities recognised that they face common challenges in the areas of urban growth and sustainable development. It was agreed to promote flagship initiatives in the following areas:

- a) Sustainable use of land and other preconditions of planning, and regulation or regeneration actions to prevent the negative effects of urban sprawl and uneven development
- b) Waste management and environmental protection

Pavlos Melas is more advanced in planning the sustainable use of land as it has a tradition of urbanism. This tradition - common in southern-Mediterranean European countries - relates to a system of planning residential areas by developing regulatory plans (land use and building rules) based on local government initiatives, but following national laws for

“
Transferring solutions can be challenging: they must fit in the social and the administrative reality of the city
”

spatial development. All inhabited areas of the municipality of Pavlos Melas are currently covered by such regulative plans. Besides this general precondition, the city faces two main problems:

- There is no regulation for peri-urban zones at the national, prefectural or local level in Greece and therefore sprawl can consume land in a fast and unpredictable way
- The planning system in Greece lacks flexibility and is not equipped to respond to sustainable development and climate change policies

San Justo, on the other hand, lacks a contributory building system and a regulative urban plan for the city's expansion, whilst facing high rates of population growth. These factors threaten peri-urban agricultural land and form preconditions

for uneven development without basic infrastructure such as drinkable water, sewage systems, roads, lighting of public spaces, etc., which is common for neighborhoods outside the city core. Extreme urban deprivation is also present in the poor neighborhood of "Zona Este", where spatial deficiencies coexist with acute societal problems such as poverty, juvenile delinquency, adolescent motherhood, school desertion, unemployment, drug addiction, etc.



Urban area with a shortage of basic infrastructure in San Justo, Argentina

In terms of implementing waste management, both municipalities recognised that only fragmented recycling initiatives have been implemented and so there is no structured method to support policies of reduction, reuse and recycling. In effect, both cities did not have the adequate know-how among personnel to support a shift toward the circular economy. It was also not possible to develop a trusting relationship with citizens to convince them to participate in a new waste management system that would encourage recycling, reuse, and sorting at source in order to reduce the amount of waste directed to landfills.

The cooperation has resulted in a Common Action Plan (available at www.pavlosmelas.gr) that outlines policy actions in both thematic areas. Solutions to challenges in these thematic areas were not necessarily novel, but through the Common Action Plan existing policy outcomes were rated, goals were reevaluated and actions were enriched with innovative views and mechanisms.



RESULTS AND IMPACT

The city-to-city cooperation under the IUC programme was a great opportunity for both cities to:

- Review the goals of the Urban Agenda for the EU and map out how they fit with local needs and problems
- Review the outcomes of already existing policies and sum up the strengths and weaknesses of each
- Reevaluate and prioritise goals in sectors of importance to sustainable development
- Enrich strategies with ideas deriving from the exchange of knowledge

A number of positive results were noticed in both thematic areas of cooperation.

In the area of sustainable development & use of land, both municipalities recognised that Pavlos Melas's knowledge and expertise in urban



Urban planning experts meeting takes place in the "Visit to Greece" programme

planning and regulation was a good base for enhancing cooperation with San Justo.

A workshop dedicated to providing information about planning systems in Europe was therefore included within the Greek study visit programme, with local experts from various fields invited to participate (municipal department of planning, university scholars and professional planners).

The conclusions of this meeting underlined the constraints in place for San Justo, and indicated that opportunities for fostering a sustainability plan were not yet clear. San Justo's plan, when it is developed, must be tailored to be compliant with

the Argentinian urban tradition. These conclusions prompted the San Justo leadership to reevaluate its strategy and include in it new preparatory and research based actions before publishing a final urban development plan.

It was also mutually understood that San Justo was more advanced in offering personalised social support and in finding mechanisms to transform social problems into part of a solution.

This support had its roots more in social proximity and the individual inspiration of leaders than knowledge based directives. A tailor-made social programme that incorporated informal work carried out by women - in this case garbage collecting - to a formal municipal recycling system was the subject of a long discussion when looking at waste management.

Pavlos Melas realised that the city should strengthen its linkages between social problems and environmental initiatives, including waste management processes. This led to a reassessment of goals in this policy area and to the promotion of actions that aimed to encourage the involvement of the public.



Discussing with some of the female beneficiaries of the municipal recycling system during the Argentinian study visit programme



LESSONS LEARNED



A partner from another side of the world can help you to think "outside of the box". Cooperating with a very different city can improve the development of holistic views and approaches. Policies may sometimes get trapped due to adherence to national or supranational mechanisms.



City-to-city cooperation encourages the reevaluation of existing policies. While preparing for mutual exchange with your partner, one inevitably reviews strengths and weaknesses in strategy, successes and failures in outcomes.



It is always better to start small and scale up. Pilot action projects or multi-phase scalable plans allow for in-depth involvement of partners and a chance to understand key factors before enlarging.



In policy planning, data counts. This is even truer in bilateral action planning and when trying to establish common goals. Different forms of assessments should be available or carried out in order to match local needs and problems to foreign ones.

THE IUC PROGRAMME

The International Urban Cooperation (IUC) programme enables cities in different global regions to link up and share solutions to common problems. It is part of a long-term strategy by the European Union to foster sustainable urban development in cooperation with the public and private sectors, as well as representatives of research and innovation, community groups and citizens. Through engaging in the IUC, cities will have the chance to share and exchange knowledge with their international

counterparts, building a greener, more prosperous future. The IUC programme is an opportunity for local governments to learn from each other, set ambitious targets, forge lasting partnerships, test new solutions, and boost their city's international profile. Its activities will support the achievement of policy objectives as well as major international agreements on urban development and climate change, such as the EU Urban Agenda, the UN Sustainable Development Goals, and the Paris Agreement.



Author:
Paris Kourti

Acknowledgments:
Arc.Nicolas Questa
Mayor of San Justo

For more information, contact:

**Dr. Paris Kourti | Director of Pavlos Melas Urban
Development Office**

+30 2313 302860

[✉ kourti@pavlosmelas.gr](mailto:kourti@pavlosmelas.gr)



A European Union
Programme

The contents of this case study are the sole responsibility of the IUC Coordination Unit and can in no way be taken to reflect the views of the European Union.